

**NEWS RELEASE from**

**WILLIAM O. LIPINSKI**

**Member of Congress  
Third District of Illinois**

Washington, D.C. (202) 225-5701  
Chicago (312) 886-0481

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For more information, contact  
Ashley Musselman at (202) 225-5701

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

**Lipinski Applauds the Signing of the O'Hare Modernization Act**

[WASHINGTON, DC] – Yesterday, Congressman Bill Lipinski praised all who made the signing of state legislation to modernize O'Hare International Airport a reality. The bill that Governor Rod Blagojevich signed yesterday states the importance of O'Hare modernization for Illinois transportation, jobs and economic activity. Specifically, the Act works to expedite the O'Hare Modernization Program. The O'Hare Modernization Program involves reconfigured runways, new terminals, additional parking, improved road access (includes new roadway access on the Airport's west side), and closing two runways. Reconfiguring the current 1950's style of intersecting runways with 21<sup>st</sup> century parallel runways will reduce delays by up to 79 percent in good weather and up to 95 percent in bad weather conditions and improve safety. The program is expected to save consumers an estimated \$380 million a year by reducing delays.

"Since O'Hare is the epicenter of the nation's aviation community, this initiative is great news for airline passengers across the nation. In addition, with modernization, the number of jobs generated by O'Hare will increase by 50 percent. All of this will be accomplished, while protecting taxpayers--no local or state tax dollars will be used to fund this project."

The O'Hare Modernization Program will be funded through General Airport Revenue Bonds, Passenger Facility Charges (a charge already in existence) and Federal Airport Improvement Program grants. No State or local tax dollars are currently used to fund O'Hare or Midway, and none will be used to fund the O'Hare Modernization Program. \$2.9 billion of funding for the O'Hare Modernization Program has been secured - \$1.9 billion in General Airport Revenue Bonds, \$657.5 million in Passenger Facility Charges and \$362.8 million in Federal Airport Improvement Program dollars. These revenues will add one new runway and extend and relocate two existing O'Hare runways, representing more than 60% of the airfield work that needs to be done to fully modernize O'Hare.

An Environmental Impact Statement (EIS), the most comprehensive level of review carried out on airport development projects, is currently underway. The FAA began the EIS process in August of 2002. The O'Hare Modernization Program has reached each objective of its aggressive schedule and work continues toward a Record of Decision during the summer of 2004.

"I am pleased that the O'Hare Modernization Program is moving forward. This common sense project will relieve congestion, generate economic growth, increase safety, protect the environment, create much-needed jobs, and help mitigate noise pollution for the residents that reside near the airport."

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